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Unpretentious Verses

A Book of Poems

By

J. THURLOW KOMMER

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no. 1.

THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS DEDICATED TO ONE WHOSE
LIFE WAS TO ME AN INSPIRATION,
AND WHOSE MEMORY, AFTER A LAPSE OF
EIGHTEEN YEARS, IS AS SWEET
AND FRESH AS THE BREATH
OF FLOWERS.

My Mother.

Preface

These "Unpretentious Verses" were written at intervals extending over a period of some seven or eight years, and are simply the result of an intense longing to express one's self in verse. Sometimes while travelling in the cars, sometimes while waiting for lunch, or whenever a leisure moment could be snatched from the busy hours of an active career, these verses were created. As the title implies, the author makes no pretense to any literary standing and therefore hopes for a lenient criticism.

J. T. K.

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PART I.

Mother and Home.

Be it near or be it far,
Home is where the loved ones are.

Unpretentious Verses

SINCE MOTHER WENT AWAY.

The old home seems a different place
From what it used to be ;
'Twas once the dearest, sweetest spot
In all the world to me ;
But she who made it so has gone,
With other friends to stay.
The old home seems a different place
Since mother went away.

And she has gone for good, ah me !
'Tis hard to think it true ;
Another home has welcomed her
Beyond the sky of blue ;
And we must do without her here
For many a weary day ;
O ! how the old home seems to change
When mother goes away.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE LAUGHTER OF A CHILD.

Nature's sweetest gift of grace
Is a child with laughing face.

For the laughter of a child
Is like music, weird and wild.

Like the tinkling of a bell
In an unfrequented dell.

Merrier than the huntsman's horn
At the breaking of the dawn.

Like the rippling of a wave
In a lone enchanted cave ;

Or the rustling of the leaves,
Answering to the summer breeze.

Sweeter than the sweetest words,
Lovelier than the song of birds.

Heaven itself is oft beguiled
With the laughter of a child.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SWINGING IN THE LONG AGO.

To and fro, to and fro,
O how gently do we go,
Swinging in the long ago;
Hear the children shout and sing
As they wait a turn to swing.

To and fro, to and fro,
Sometimes high and sometimes low,
Swinging in the long ago;
What delightful memories cling
'Round that dear old-fashioned swing.

To and fro, to and fro,
Mother calls and we must go,
Swinging in the long ago;
But the swing keeps swinging on
Others come when we are gone.

To and fro, to and fro,
On the swing of life we go,
Thinking of the long ago;
Love's old swing is swinging slow
Some One calls and we must go.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A LASTING DEBT.

All that the future holds for me,
In this life or another,
All that I am or hope to be
I owe it to my mother.

If there are evils I have missed,
Or sins that I've forsaken ,
Her gentle voice it was that called
The man in me to waken.

If I have helped some other man,
Some weak and struggling brother,
I did it in the strength of love,
The love that followed mother.

And any good I may possess,
That calls for commendation,
The debt of gratitude I owe
To mother's ministration.

So while this busy life shall last,
And mayhap in that other,
My grateful heart shall strive to pay
The debt I owe my mother.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

AN UNFORGOTTEN VOICE.

When the busy day is over,
And the west is tinged with red;
When the twilight falls around me,
And the stars are overhead—
Then old memories awaken voices
That were silenced years ago,
And I hear the voice of mother
Speaking to me sweet and low.

When I pass within the shadow
Of the slumberland of rest,
When the shroud of mystery folds me,
And I dream of all the blest—
Ah! those unforgotten voices,
How they fall upon my ear,
And above them all, so clearly,
Mother's voice I still can hear.

When the day of life is over,
And there comes the evening star;
When I pass the Golden Gateway
To the wonderland afar—
How my anxious heart shall listen,
As I near the white-robed throng,
For the voice of that dear mother,
More than all the angel song.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE FIRST BORN

TO F. B. S.

Safely folded to her breast
Is the long-awaited guest;
All her anxious fears are gone
For to her a child is born.

From the vale of gloom and death
She has brought a living breath;
And the wonder in her eyes
Tells of joy and glad surprise.

Here is joy that puts to shame
Every joy that mortals claim:
Love that is akin to love
In the heart of God above.

With her child upon her breast
Mother is supremely blest:
Eden never knew a bliss
More divinely sweet than this.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

MY MOTHER'S FACE.

I see it now, that face so dear,
'Tis on my memory traced;
Time cannot cause to disappear
The vision of her face.
I see it in my waking hours,
I see it in my dreams,
And fairer than the fairest flowers
Its beauty to me seems.

I see the look of sympathy
From eyes grown bright with love;
The look that meant so much to me
As with the world I strove.
The look of kind approval, too,
That helped me to be strong;
The look of sadness when she knew
That I had done the wrong.

The smile that cheered my broken heart
I see it still to-day:
How often did it joy impart
And chase my gloom away.
O! precious memories of the past
Find in my heart a place;
Till I shall see in Heaven at last
My mother's blessed face.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A SACRED SPOT.

O, let me kneel just here,
Just here where mother knelt!
That I may feel within my breast
The joy that mother felt.

Then, let me linger here,
The while my heart is sad,
That to my troubled soul may come
The peace that mother had.

This dear and sacred spot
To me is hallowed ground;
For here I find the friend I need,
The Christ that mother found.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IF MOTHER KNEW.

If mother knew how you have strayed
And from the good departed,
How you have left the narrow road,
And all your manhood bartered;
Ah, me! I'm sure her tender heart
Would be all torn and bleeding,
If she could see, through all her tears,
The kind of life you're leading.

For, when you left her years ago,
'To follow fortune's beckoning,
Your eye was clear, your hand was strong,
And in her way of reckoning
She little thought that time would mar
The child that she had nourished;
The boy whose life was more to her
Than all else that she cherished.

But, oh! how you have changed since then;
Your eye has lost its glitter;
Your face shows many a scar of sin
And life is hard and bitter.
Ah, yes! 'tis well she does not know!
Good God! reveal it never:
The knowledge of her son's disgrace
Hide from her eyes for ever.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE SWEETEST LOVE.

The sweetest love in all the world,
And equaled by no other,
Is such as stirs the heart and life
Of a devoted mother.

A love that labors ceaselessly
To make some burden lighter,
That works without a thought of gain
To make some life the brighter.

A love that never, never tires,
And never groweth weary;
That finds the fullness of its joy
In making life more cheery.

Unselfish in whate'er it does,
And asketh but this token,
The answering love from other lives
Revealed in deed or spoken.

O! for a love like mother's love!
Be this my constant pleading!
O! for a love like mother's love!
'Tis what the world is needing.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SLEEPY TOWN.

When shadows of the evening fall,
And night spreads darkness over all,
When comes the closing of the day,
And little folk are tired of play—
A marching host of great renown
Tramps on its way to Sleepy Town.

All uniformed in robes of white,
With candle-torch to give them light:
A mother's kiss to urge them on,
A sweet "Good-night," and they are gone:
Up! up! the wooden hill they go,
For Sleepy Town's up high, you know.

Ere long the quiet town they gain,
Where needed rest they may obtain;
But ere they pass within its gates
Each white-robed pilgrim, kneeling, waits
To ask the Shepherd King come down
To guard the host of Sleepy Town.

And now, 'tis silent as the grave;
You hear no sound of voices, save
The sound of mother's nursery clock
In measured tones—"Tick-tock, tick-tock";

UNPRETENTIOUS, VERSES

No childish noise is heard to drown
The faithful clock in Sleepy Town.

But when the sun peeps o'er the hills,
And with new life all nature thrills,
When twittering bird and songster gay
Proclaim the waking of the day,
The marching host of great renown
Comes tramping back from Sleepy Town.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THANKSGIVING.

For country and for flag,
For Freedom's blood-washed soil,
The land our fathers loved
And hallowed by their toil;
For this dear land, with freedom ringing,
We render thee a glad Thanksgiving.

For home and fireside,
A refuge and retreat;
For all the sacred ties
Of kin, and friendship, sweet;
For home, with all its love-light gleaming,
We offer Thee a glad thanksgiving.

For church, and liberty,
To worship as we will;
For faith in all the good
And power to shun the ill:
For all the joy of holy living
We render Thee a glad thanksgiving.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SOMEHOW OR OTHER.

Somehow or other you can tell,
As day by day he meets you,
What sort of man your neighbor is
Just by the way he greets you;
The way he looks you in the eye,
Your searching glance returning;
The way he takes you by the hand,
And how he says "Good morning."

Somehow or other you can feel
A sympathetic tingle,
Both in the hand-shake and the voice,
As now and then you mingle;
A something indescribable,
Beyond the power of telling;
The mystic touch of soul with soul,
Inviting or repelling.

Somehow or other when you pass
To other scenes and places,
And leave behind you friends of yore
And old familiar faces,
Both you and they shall still recall,
In strange and wondrous measure,
The greetings in the days gone by
With either pain or pleasure.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE UNCERTAIN SPAN.

Between the child of youthful days
And yonder aged man
There lies a world of changing years,
A vast, uncertain span.

And he who starts to cross the bridge,
'Twixt early life and late,
Must be prepared for weal or woe,
For grief or blissful state.

For who can know, or who can tell
What lies beyond his gaze,
Beyond the curtain that divides
To-day from future days?

But at the end of every life
There lies some cherished goal;
Who reaches it must strength possess
Of body, mind and soul.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

HOME IS WHERE THE LOVED ONES ARE.

Be it near or be it far,
Home is where the loved ones are.

For without love's burning flame
Home is nothing but a name.

But where love's pure light doth shine
There's a brilliancy divine;

And the meanest spot on earth
Is a paradise of mirth.

For a home where love is leaven
Is the highest type of heaven.

Whether near or whether far,
Home is where the loved ones are.

PART II.

Voices of Nature.

All nature seemeth fair
When faith inspires the view ;
Naught with her can compare
To charm our souls anew.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

BUTTERCUPS.

Peeping up above the sod,
See how merrily they nod!
Little pilgrims sent of God.

O, what multitudes untold
Stand arrayed, like queens of old,
In rare garments green and gold.

Scattered over hill and vale
In a wondrous golden trail,
Dancing in the faintest gale.

But how quickly do they pass,
Hiding faces 'neath the grass,
Like some bashful little lass.

Will they ever lift again
Faces bathed in sun and rain,
As a maiden fair and vain?

Yes, when twelve months have gone round,
Once again, all sweetly gowned,
Buttercups will strew the ground.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE SOUL OF THE SEA.

I stand beside the ocean shore,
While thought crowds thought yet more and more,
And as I watch thy ceaseless roll
I feel that thou, too, hast a soul.

A soul that stirs thee at its will,
For thou art never, never still.
Oh! restless sea, 'twixt man and thee,
How strong a bond of sympathy!

For thou art tossed by wind and storm,
Thy bosom by the tempest torn;
Forever o'er thy trackless waste
The elements in fury haste.

The surging, seething, foaming wave
Uplifts itself as from a grave:
The lightning's flash, the thunder's roll
Wake all the voices of thy soul.

Thou seemest like a demon's child,
Now maddened by a spirit wild.
Lashed into fury by the gale
Thy soul lifts up its mournful wail.

Deep down within the human breast
There dwells the spirit of unrest,

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

And often o'er the troubled life
Come storm and tempest, rage and strife.

When passions dark gain mastery,
When demons gloat in hellish glee,
The soul in fearful anguish torn
Mourns as the sea when in a storm.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE OLD YEAR.

He'll soon be gone, for even now
The marks of death are on his brow ;
And we stand watch with listening ear,
Like friend with friend whose end is near.
The old year now is dying !

The joys he brought, the sorrows, too,
Though they be many or be few,
Will like the year but shortly last
And soon be memories of the past.
The old year now is dying.

Farewell old year ! Farewell to thee ;
Thy wearied soul shall soon be free ;
And we stand watch with listening ear,
Like friend with friend whose end is near.
The old year now is dying.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE NEW YEAR.

He'll soon be here! and we shall greet
The sprightly tread of youthful feet;
And we wait with listening ear,
The coming of the glad new year.
The new year is approaching.

What he shall bring us no one knows;
Or what shall leave us 'ere he goes;
His gifts from all are kept concealed
And in good time to each revealed;
The new year is approaching.

Then welcome to the glad new year!
We hail thy coming with good cheer!
Like friend for friend we waiting stand
To greet thee with an outstretched hand.
The new year is approaching.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SUNSET.

When I look out across the fields
To where the sun is sinking,
The glory of that wondrous scene
Sets all my heart to thinking,
And wondering—if away beyond,
In some far distant evening,
There can be sight as grand and fair
As when the sun is leaving.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

MOONLIGHT.

The last faint glow of the setting sun
Has faded into gloom ;
While darkened skies
The light defies,
Proclaiming now it's doom.

O'er all the earth falls the infinite shroud
Of an impenetrable night.
All Nature's blue
Has changed its hue,
Departed is the light.

The vast expanse of the circling heavens
Is studded thick with stars ;
The garment worn
By earth, and adorned
With glints of diamond bars.

The scurrying clouds in their rapid flight,
Unveil the silvery moon ;
It surely seems
That all its beams
Are borrowed from the noon.

The Earth once more, from its sombre shade,
Transformed by her pallid light,
Glow with the ray,
As if the day
Had visited the night.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

NATURE'S FAITHFULNESS.

The sun shall never cease to shine
As long as time remains ;
Nor clouds shall e'er withhold from earth
Their life refreshing rains.

The Summer's heat, the Winter's cold,
Shall in their time prevail,
And each its mission shall fulfill,
Nor shall they ever fail.

The streams shall reach the boundless sea,
Nor ever lose their way.
The mountains raise their peaks toward heaven
Till the heavens shall pass away.

The seed that dies beneath the ground
Shall once again revive ;
The blade, the stalk, the ripened fruit
In order shall arrive.

With what precision Nature works,
And settled law obeys ;
Who will may valued lessons learn
From all her faithful ways.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SPACE.

Boundless infinitude! Immeasurable! Immense!
Beyond the reach of human thought
Or finite man's pretense.

Encircling all, and still by none encircled thou;
Through ages all a mystery;
No less a mystery now.

Deeper than any depth; higher thou than all;
In length outreaching every length,
Embracing great and small.

Before the worlds were framed, or time began its
 sway,
Thou wert and ever will remain
When these shall fade away.

Eternal, like the God whose might has peopled
 thee
With wondrous worlds and blazing suns
In vast immensity.

Throughout thy spacious realms and o'er thy
 trackless way,
The mightiest atom ever formed
May travel on for aye.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A million miles, to thee, is but the merest span,
And thine is distance far remote,
Unmeasured yet by man.

Incomprehensible! Ever a mystery;
The wonder still of conscious souls
Throughout eternity.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE SEASONS.

I love the Springtime with its showers,
Its dreamy haze and fragrant flowers ;
I love in solitude to stray
Along some violet covered way,
And while away the happy hours.

I love the Summer with its glee,
Its verdant fields and leafy tree ;
I love to linger 'neath the shade
By overhanging branches made,
And catch the song of bird and bee.

I love the Autumn brown and sere,
The herald of the closing year ;
The Autumn, with its fruit and grain,
Made ripe by Summer sun and rain
And garnered in with grateful cheer.

I love the Winter's mighty blast
Whose breath has chained the rivers fast ;
Whose hand spreads o'er the earth below,
The mantle white, of spotless snow,
That covers field and forest vast.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE PENOBSCOT.

O! beautiful Penobscot! New England's charming stream!

Thy glories are deserving a worthier poet's theme.

For as we sail thy waters, or view thee from the shore,

A thrill of admiration steals through us o'er and o'er.

Thee nature seems to favor with many a changing scene;

Sometimes a rock-bound pathway, sometimes through fields of green.

Along whose banks, like sentinels, the pine and fir trees rise;

While here the birch and cedar outline the glowing skies.

When gleams of golden sunlight beam on thy waters blue,

'Tis like a path of glory that opens to our view.

Or when the pale moon glitters across the dark of night,

Behold! upon thy bosom a trail of silvery light.

O! beautiful Penobscot! fair river deep and wide!
Maine's sturdy sons have reason to look on thee with pride.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IN TUNE WITH NATURE.

When fields are green and flowers deck the
valleys,
When every tree is jubilant with song ;
When sunshine floods the earth with golden glory
And skies of blue prevail the whole day long ;
'Tis then the heart is blithe as merry music,
And every voice is lifted high in song.

When skies are gray and earth is dull and dreary,
When song of bird falls shrill upon the air ;
When fields are brown and every tree is leafless,
When barrenness and gloom are everywhere ;
Ah ! then, how oft the singing turns to sighing,
And what was mirth is now a plaintive air.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SUMMER.

O! who would wish for happier hours,
Or more delightful pleasures,
Than come when comes the Summer time
With all its matchless treasures?

The wondrous music of the woods,
When birds are all asinging;
The beauty of the meadow flowers
That happy June keeps bringing.

The fragrance of the new mown hay,
That careless feet turn over;
The walk along some shady lane,
Or through the fields of clover.

The sweet refreshing smell of rain
As daylight fast is leaving;
The breath of yonder coming storm
To cool the hours of evening.

O! who can part without a tear
From Summer days of gladness?
Or who can say good-bye to June
Without a tinge of sadness?

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

GOD IN NATURE.

The splendor of our Lord
In Nature's works we see ;
His riches are outpoured
With lavish hand and free.

He covers all the earth
With beauty and with grace,
And gems of countless worth
He buries 'neath its face.

All Nature seemeth fair
When faith inspires the view.
Naught with her can compare
To charm our souls anew.

The flowers of varied hue,
All laden with perfume,
Sparkle with morning dew
And show forth love in bloom.

The tiniest blade that grows,
The oak of mammoth height,
Each tells how God bestows
His gentleness and might.

The mountains towering high,
The vast expanse of sea,
Had they but voice to cry,
Would hail God's majesty.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

AUTUMN.

The summer time has passed away
And autumn days are here ;
Most beautiful of all the days
That crown the changing year.

The grass upon the meadow-land
Gleams with the frosted dew ;
The trees have changed their garb of green
For one of varied hue.

It looks as if some fairy elf
Had dipped his brush in gold,
And, with a touch of magic power,
His graceful art unrolled.

The woods are dressed in crimson robes,
Arranged with utmost care ;
The hedges wind about the fields
Like threads of scarlet rare.

And not alone in brilliant tints
Does autumn time abound ;
But in its harvests, rich and sweet,
With glorious fullness crowned.

Soon will the autumn days go by,
And earth shall once more stand,
Bereft of all her beauteous charms
By winter's blighting hand.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE WOODS IN SPRING.

You hear the rustle of a wing,
You hear the robin and bluebird sing,
While loitering through the woods in spring.

Refreshed by morning's sparkling dew
The May flowers nod a welcome true,
The Arbutus and the violet blue.

The odor of the woods in spring
Is such a sweet, delicious thing,
'Tis perfume fit to please a king.

By mossy bank and trickling stream
You linger long, the while you seem
Entranced by some delightful dream.

The woods in spring, with verdure grown,
Are like the ancient garden lone,
Where God and Adam walked alone.

PART III.
The After Life.

If death is all, then tell me why
This longing for the Bye-and-Bye.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE PILOT.

The sea runs high!
A storm is nigh,
And we are far from home:
Night comes apace,
And we must face
The angry waves alone.

Yet not alone
Are they who own
The Pilot from afar:
A steersman he
Who knows the sea
Without a guiding star.

And when at last
The night is past,
And storm and tempest cease;
With wind and tide
We safely glide
Into the port of peace.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

AT EVENTIDE.

“Now, when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.”

Yet once again 'tis eventide;
And in the western sky
The glory of the sunset hour
Suggests that God is nigh:
And once again, O gracious Lord,
Before the darkness fall,
We bring our broken hearts to thee,
For thou canst heal them all.
Our stricken souls are faint indeed,
For sin hath laid them low;
Our spirits cry to thee for life,
Dear Lord! the gift bestow;
And when life's sun at last shall set
To rise on earth no more,
The eventide shall bring us health,
Through Him whom we adore.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE RAINBOW.

There's a rainbow in the heavens,
'Tis a promise from on high ;
God's eternal goodness speaketh
By this token in the sky.

What a vast stupendous archway !
Reaching far, from sea to sea ;
Even so God's mercy stretcheth
Over all eternity.

After cloud and storm it cometh,
When the sun breaks through the rift ;
Thus shall come a brighter glory
When the gloom of death shall lift.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE NIGHT IS DARK.

The night is dark, but soon will come the dawning
When eyes long dimmed by sorrow's night
Shall bathe at last in heaven's light.

The way is long, but hath some day an ending,
When aching brow and tired feet
Shall refuge find, and safe retreat.

The thorns are sharp, and hands are torn and
bleeding,
But soon the hour of pain will cease
In God's eternal, quiet peace.

The cross is huge, and 'neath it forms are bending,
But future years shall lift its weight,
It cannot pass the "Golden Gate."

The storm is wild and human hearts are quaking;
But life's rough sea will soon be crossed,
And harbored safe the tempest-tossed.

Death's hand is cold, but why this fearful dreading?
His touch will but release the soul
And set it free from earth's control.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Today we are what we are
Because of yesterday ;
For in the past we lay the plans
For life today.

What tomorrow we shall be
Depends upon today ;
For what we build of character
Shall with us stay.

And all the distant future,
So dim and undiscerned,
Tomorrow's life shall mould and shape
Through truth we've learned.

And so, the past and present,
Shall with the future blend,
To build for us a life that must
All time transcend.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE ETERNAL MORN.

After the sun has gone to rest,
Faded the crimson in the west,
 After the night has passed away
 Cometh again the gleams of day,
 Telling us hope is born.
After the darkness, after the chill,
After the hours when all is still
 Cometh a ray of golden light,
 Coming with life and power and might,
 Cometh again the morn.

After a soul has gone to rest,
Gone when the Lord shall deem it best,
 After the darkness, after the grave,
 After the crossing of Jordan's wave
 Cometh a better dawn.
After the gloom of death is o'er,
After we reach the distant shore,
 After the night has passed away
 Cometh again the gleams of day,
 Comes an eternal morn.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE DAY OF DAYS.

If it were always morning,
How glad our hearts would be!
With faces ever toward the east
The rising sun to see.

How happy would we count it,
If, on our day of life,
The noontide never found us
A-wearying in the strife.

And O! the thought of sadness
That ever comes to stun,
When evening crowds around us
E'er all our work is done.

If it were always morning,
How much our hands could do,
As onward, still untiring,
Life's labors we'd pursue.

And so we wait the coming
Of that bright Day of days,
When night shall no more darken
The Sun's eternal rays.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

HOME AT LAST.

Travel-stained and weary,
The pilgrim hastens on;
It may be that life's toil some day
Has only just begun;
But in his heart is gladness,
Though sky be overcast;
For he is traveling with the hope
Of reaching home at last.

Heavy-laden, footsore,
He climbs the rugged ways;
Life's noontide sun is in the heavens
And scorching are its rays;
But Hope her song is singing;
Above the fiery blast
He hears a voice that whispers low
Of rest and home at last.

Tired with the journey
Yet still unmoved by pain,
His face is ever toward the west
Where peace and joy remain.
Bright Hope is still his portion,
The mile-stones all are past,
The sun has almost gone to rest
And home is near at last.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

Lifted are the burdens,
The journey now is o'er;
Though travel-stained and worn with care
He's passed the open door;
And friends from whom he parted
Are to his bosom clasped,
Their voices mingled in the song
Of "Welcome home at last."

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE TRAIL OF LIFE.

Sometimes along the sunlit hills
Where daylight lingers longest ;
Where faith is firm and hope is bright
And heart and hand are strongest ;
Above the jarring notes of strife,
That fill the world with sadness,
The path leads upward, where the peaks
Are crowned with joy and gladness.

And sometimes down the vale of gloom
Through mystic shadows winding ;
Where hang the heavy clouds of sin,
The pilgrim's vision blinding ;
Where faith is weak, and hope is dull,
And heart and hand are failing ;
Where those who journey fear lest night
Shall find their spirits quailing.

The trail along the sunlit hills
Winds through earth's scenes of beauty,
While all along the downward slope
The traveler faces duty ;
But whether upward to the heights
Or down the vale of sorrow,
The trail of life leads ever on
To God's eternal morrow.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IN THE HARBOR.

When the boat comes into harbor,
With its sails all tattered,
With its storm-swept decks deserted,
And the masts all shattered,
Who is there will blame the captain,
Though the cargo may be lost,
If the crew but make the haven,
And the angry sea be crossed?

When we reach the eternal harbor,
By the tempest driven,
Though within the sea has perished
All that earth has given,
Surely none will blame the Captain,
When at last the storm shall cease,
If, with cheerings, and with shoutings,
We shall hail the Port of Peace.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE PILGRIM'S FRIEND.

Death is but release from care and toil and sorrow ;
The closing of a tiresome day—
And rest upon the morrow.

Death is only sleep, after whose final waking
A gladsome note of praise shall rise,
Like songs when morn is breaking.

Death is but a stream, across whose placid waters
The voyager may safely sail
With all earth's sons and daughters.

'Tis the pilgrim's friend; the last of all to leave
him;
A silent friend, who never speaks
An unkind word to grieve him.

'Tis a road that winds through regions dark and
dreary,
But endeth where the dawning light
Of Heaven is bright and cheery.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

GRIEVE NOT FOR ME.

Grieve not for me when from this world departing,
My spirit leaves its tenement of clay;
But rest in hope that some time in the future
We'll meet again, another happier day;
So lift the weight of sadness from thy heart
And utter no complaint when I depart.

Grieve not for me when I have crossed the river,
The boatman shall return from yonder shore,
And some day thou shalt take the quiet journey,
And bid farewell to earth forevermore;
While over there, with longing heart I'll wait
To welcome thee, close by the Golden Gate.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IMMORTALITY.

And can it ever be
That this is all of life?
The weary toil, the aching brow,
Till death the bitter strife?
If this be true, then why remain
To suffer one more pang of pain?

And must we still believe
That death is all supreme?
That life shall lose itself at last
In this dark, sullen stream?
Then why eternal goodness crave,
If there's no hope beyond the grave?

And all the sacred ties
That bind us heart to heart,
Shall they be severed, once for all,
When friends from earth depart?
If so it be, then tell me, why
This longing for the "bye and bye?"

Ah, surely there must be
A better life than this;
A life where nevermore shall end
The measure of our bliss:
Where nevermore shall come again
The heart-ache and the fevered brain.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

HERE AND THERE.

Here the sorrow and the sighing,
 There the joyful song of praise;
Here the darkness and the dying,
 There the life through endless days,
Here the cross of bitter anguish,
 There the crown with glory bright;
Here the cry of souls that languish,
 There the shoutings of delight.

Here the good and evil mingling,
 There the pure and undefiled;
Here the waywardness and sinning,
 There the spirit of the child,
Here the wishing and the wondering,
 There to know as we are known;
Here the puzzling and the pondering,
 There to walk with God alone.

Here the weariness of toiling,
 There the blessedness of rest;
Here from danger oft recoiling,
 There the safety of the blest.
Here the waiting and the longing,
 There to meet our loved and own;
Here the pilgrims homeward thronging,
 There the gathering 'round the throne.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

'TIS BEST TO THINK OF DAYS TO COME.

'Tis best to think of days to come,
Wherever they may find us,
Than to recall the years gone by
With all they may remind us.

'Tis best to look with eager eye
For gladness on the morrow.
Than to complain of yesterday
Because it brought thee sorrow.

'Tis better far to sing with hope
Than to despair in silence;
The grief that shuts thy spirit in
Will do thee greater violence.

The best of life is yet to come,
When joy shall banish sorrow;
The western sky gives promise of
A brighter day to-morrow.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE CHIMES OF HOPE.

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust"!
And is this all, or may I trust
When over me these words are spoken—
'Tis only that the bond is broken,
Which held my captive spirit fast
And chained me to the restless past?

Then, whither shall my soul take flight—
To regions dark or realms of light?
Shall I go as a lonely stranger,
Trembling before expected danger?
Or, shall some wondrous Presence stand
To greet me in the unknown land?

Ah! verily it must be so!
Else who is there would dare to go?
Or who would ever face the morrow
Without a fear nor trace of sorrow?
Did not the chimes of Hope impart
A note of gladness to each heart?

PART IV.

Miscellaneous.

Nor this nor that is all of life,
 'Tis somewhat of a mixture,
And like stray hairs upon the head
 No plan is quite a fixture.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE VALUE OF A SMILE.

Smile, and the world will bless you;
Frown, and its curse you bear;
For the sad old earth will measure your worth
By the countenance that you wear.
Life has its gloom and sadness;
Escape it you may try in vain;
But a smile on your face will help to erase
The lines of anguish and pain.

Smile, and 'twill be reflected
In the soul of each man you greet;
But a frown on your brow is repelling, somehow,
And will cause even friends to retreat.
There's a gleam of heavenly gladness
In the smile of an honest face,
And the gleam will last when the life is past,
As a beacon light of grace.

Smile, and your facial radiance
Shall illumine the world's dark night;
For the spirit of cheer will hover near,
When the fact is wreathed in light.
Smile, and you win a welcome;
Frown, and the curse is there;
For the sad old earth will measure your worth
By the countenance that you wear.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE BEST DEEDS.

The sweetest flower that ever grew
Is not the rose or violet blue;
But, mayhap one of beauty shorn,
Yet fragrant as the early morn.

The brightest sun that ever shone
In yonder blue of Heaven's dome,
Is that which shines to give Earth light,
But not to wither, scorch or blight.

The happiest days we spend on earth
Are not the days of giddy mirth:
But those wherein we do some deed
To help a brother in his need.

The greatest acts that men perform,
Are not the works of vain pride born;
But in some humble lowly state,
The deed of love alone is great.

The richest gains the soul counts o'er
Are not the gains in earthly store;
But those laid up in Heaven above,
The richest treasures of our love.

The jeweled crown that saints shall wear
Is not bedecked with diamonds rare;
But sparkles brighter than Earth's sun
With loving deeds of duty done.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

FORGET THE PAST.

(FROM THE PROSE OF LONGFELLOW.)

Forget the past, and bury in oblivion
The memories of the days of yore:
It comes not back, nor good nor evil bringing;
The yesterdays return no more.

To-day is thine; act in it well and wisely,
Increasing now thy present store:
Be thou alert, each golden hour improving,
Else soon they pass the open door.

And if good fortune spare thee till the morrow,
Thy place be field or forge or mart,
Go forth to meet that all uncertain future
With courage and a manly heart.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE POWER OF THOUGHT.

Strange product of the brain,
What wondrous power is thine:
For thou art not controlled
By either place or time.

We cannot barriers raise
To check thee in thy flight,
Through regions yet unknown
Thou roamest with delight.

Sometimes through future years,
Untrod by mortal man;
Through paths so undefined
No mortal eye can scan.

And sometimes through the past,
Where memory lingers long,
Back through the distant years
That to the dead belong.

How quickly thou dost fly
Through realms of boundless space;
And in a moment's time
The universe embrace.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

VERSICLES.

Ye lads and lassies learn this truth
And ne'er from it depart;
That he who would a conqueror be
Must conquer first his heart.

Although we fail so often in attaining,
And never reach the goal of perfect life;
Remember this, the virtue is in striving,
And rich reward comes after manly strife.

Not more of knowledge that we need,
Nor is it power to do;
But most of all a willing mind
To make our service true.

Nor this, nor that, is all of life;
'Tis somewhat of a mixture;
And like stray hairs upon the head,
No plan is quite a fixture.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE GOSPEL OF GOOD CHEER.

The man who thinks the world is wrong
And feels forlorn and blue,
Whose troubles rise like mountain peaks
To hide the good from view;
I say that this man needs to learn
The gospel of good cheer,
And needs to know that Hope will bring
A smile for every tear.

For there's abundant happiness
In this old world of ours;
The thorns may pierce your bleeding feet
But yonder bloom the flowers;
And so I say to every man
Who drinks the bitter cup,—
Don't let your troubles keep you down,
My brother, cheer thee up!

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

LOVE ETERNAL.

Love is the virtue and the grace
That fits men for the greater place.

Love lifts the burden, rights the wrong,
And cheers the drooping heart with song.

Love gives the best, and gives the most,
Yet never of its alms doth boast.

Humility, gift from above,
Is stamped on all the deeds of love.

Love bears the sorrow, takes the blame,
Despising all reproach and shame.

Love seeks that others may obtain,
And envieth not a brother's gain.

Endures with patience earthly ills,
And selfish clamorings promptly stills.

Love faileth not ; all else shall fail
And be forgotten as a tale ;

But love shall evermore remain
On earth, in heaven, the noblest strain.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE VICTOR.

It matters not though you may fall
And fail to hear the captain's call
 Amid the battle's din.
Men cannot say that you have failed,
Though in the dust your colors trailed,
 If you have fought to win.

For he deserves the victor's wreath,
Immortal as the gods bequeathe
 To all who conquer sin:
If, struggling on with might and main,
He counts not either loss or gain,
 But ever fights to win.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE BETTER WAY.

It will pay you to be cheery,
Rather than to wear the frown;
For the cheerful face is worthy
Of the sceptre and the crown:
For it makes the world the brighter,
And it's surely worth one's while
To relieve earth's darkened shadows
With the brightness of a smile.

You can speak the word of kindness
To uplift the drooping heart;
For it takes no more of effort
Than to speed the poisoned dart;
But what a vast and mighty difference,
When we reckon things aright,
Whether words in love are spoken
Or in anger take their flight.

You can do the deed of mercy
With a willing hand and true;
Doing unto others daily
As you'd have them do to you:
Human hearts will fondly cherish
Every act that meets their need
And the world will be the better
For the smile, the word, the deed.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE MONARCH.

Love is a monarch
Strong and bold,
And rules o'er kingdoms
Vast, untold.

Not with a rod of
Ancient mould,
But with a scepter
Wrought in gold.

Not with a voice of
Thunder tone,
But with a stillness
All his own.

While other sovereigns
Leave the throne,
Love lives to conquer
All alone.

Ever before him
Slaves are we,
And in subjection
Bend the knee.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

LEARN TO WAIT.

Yes! learn to wait; 'tis easier far
To crowd in where the workers are,
Than to hold aloof or stand afar.

'Tis easier, too, to fight along
With soldiers who repel the wrong,
Than to await the victor's song.

'Tis hard to fold the hands and rest,
With patient heart to stand the test,
And feel that, after all, 'tis best.

The hardest task is just to wait:
To know that whether soon or late
God plans the end, and not blind fate.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WHEN LOVE IS THE HARPER.

Deep down in the heart of each mortal that liveth
Lie slumbering emotions, as yet all unstirred ;
All dormant, yet ready to spring into action
When reached and awakened by deed or by
word.

Sometimes with the force of an on-rushing
torrent,
That carries destruction and death in its path,
The feelings once roused by the demon of hatred
Stay not, till in vengeance they spend all their
wrath.

Sometimes, like the wail of a soul in its anguish,
When chords have been touched by the dark
hand of grief ;
While copious tears, flowing as from a fountain,
Afford to the heart sweet and blessed relief.

Sometimes, like the harp, in the hands of a harper,
Whose strings, though once silent, sweet
melody find ;
Thus wakens the soul into music all glorious
When love is the harper that touches mankind.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

DELAY NOT.

Delay not this day's duty
Until to-morrow's sun,
But make each passing moment
Complete in service done:
The day is brief, and soon will fall
The curtain of the night o'er all.

Delay not! for the morrow,
If it should dawn for thee,
Shall crowded be with duties,
And so 'twill ever be;
What work to-day thou mayest shun
Forever will remain undone.

Delay not! for the future
To thee is all unknown,
And thou art only granted
The present hour alone:
Delay will mean for thee defeat,
And death shall find thee incomplete.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE CALL OF LOVE.

The sea was made for sailing,
Then ho! lads, to the sea!!
The fields invite the ploughman,
Then come and plough with me.

But what's the use of sailing,
If boats were made to row;
Or why should men be ploughing
If grain were not to grow!

The roses waste their sweetness,
If none there be who care
To revel in the fragrance
That's wafted on the air.

The voice of love is calling
Nor shall it call in vain:
For hearts were made for loving,
As clouds were made for rain.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

LIFE AND DEATH.

'Twixt Life and Death, earth's ever silent rulers,
Rank enmity exists and bitter strife;
And never do they pass a friendly greeting,
For Death is fiendish when he meets with Life.
Like some kind monarch Life rules o'er his own,
'Till Death relentlessly assumes the throne.

Life scatters hope, and rays of light and sunshine,
And in his trail immortal flowers bloom;
While envious Death, like some dark visaged monster

With outstretched wings, o'ershades the path with gloom;
And where Life planted flowers to adorn
Death follows on with thistle and with thorn.

Both young and old give Life their fondest service;
They do his bidding as they come and go;
Thus would they serve him without stint or measure
If left untrammelled by this fearful foe:
But Death lurks near Life's subjects to annoy,
To hinder, hamper, cripple and destroy.

Some far-off day, or mayhap some day nearer,
A song of triumph Nature's sons shall sing,

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

To find that in one long and final struggle
Life vanquished Death, and robbed him of his
sting:
That Life has forced all powers in earth to yield
And Death forevermore must quit the field.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

OPTIMISM.

What care I for the howling storm,
Or the tempest's furious blast?
There's a shelter for me, somewhere, I know,
'Till the storm be overpast.

What care I though the darkness deep
Covers the land and the sea?
There's a gleam of light from the farther shore,
That will light a path for me.

And though the mists becloud the sky,
And the earth seems sad and drear,
I know that the sun will shine again
With its warmth of life and cheer.

And what if the daily cup of life
Be sometimes filled with gall;
At the fount of bliss I'll forget my grief,
And the bitterness of it all.

Then rejoice my soul, and sing with glee,
For the evil comes not to stay!
And to-morrow the eyes shall beam with joy
That are filled with tears to-day.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE MAN FOR THE TIMES.

Give me the man who will act a man's part
 'Mid the strenuous battles of life;
Who will stand unmoved on the rock of truth
 'Gainst the threatening waves of strife.

Whose heart has been tried by the fires of heaven;
 Whose soul from all fear has been freed;
The man whose religion is more than a form,
 And whose faith is more than a creed.

Who will stand unswervingly for the right
 Though the multitude choose the wrong;
Who cannot be lured by the glitter of gold
 Nor even the world's siren song.

The man who can feel the strivings within
 Of a conscience that's easily stirred;
Who never delays to answer the call
 When the voice of duty is heard.

Who prizes his honor above all else,
 And serves till the day is done;
Who never deserts in the hour of need,
 But fights till the battle is won.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IN THE MORNING.

If things look dark and dismal now—
Just be a little patient, thou,
And wait until the dawning.
'Tis then the birds begin to sing,
The shadows fade, and everything
Seems brighter in the morning.

If Life's hard problems seem to you
A little more than you can do,
Just take a kindly warning—
Don't try to solve them in the night,
For you've a chance to get them right
By waiting 'till the morning.

If there is some unpleasant work
That you may seem inclined to shirk,
'This truth you should be learning—
That many a task would easier be
If you would wait 'till darkness flee,
And do it in the morning.

If at the close of day you feel
A sort of languor o'er you steal,
Just wait until the morning;
For then you'll be as one refreshed,
And ready, too, to stand the test
Of labor in the morning.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A RETROSPECTIVE

When I look back across Life's way
What sad regrets awaken,
As I behold, through bitter tears,
The path I should have taken.

The thought of good I might have done
The passing years have brought me,
And unused opportunities
A bitter lesson taught me.

If I could but retrace my steps,
And start at the beginning,
I'd shun the road that led my feet
To waywardness and sinning.

And do the deeds that love requires,
Forsaking virtue, never ;
But what's the use of musing thus?
The past is gone forever.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

ONE WOMAN'S LOVE.

She loved him, yes, and loved him well,
A man whose life was black as hell;
Ah! surely love is blinded!
Else how could one so good as she
Be drawn to one so vile as he,
Or one so earthly minded.

For she was pure as driven snow;
'Twas if an angel, bending low,
Should stoop to kiss a devil,
She may have thought that love would win;
That love could lift him out of sin
And raise him to her level.

But now she knows 'twas all in vain;
And though her tears fall like the rain,
Nor tears nor love can save him;
And while his friends are now but few,
One thing remaineth ever true,
The love that first she gave him.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE GRIM DESTROYER.

With hollow eyes and cheek of bone,
With nerve of steel and heart of stone;
'Tis thus in fancy that we trace
The grim Destroyer of the Race.

With figure gaunt and features bold,
With icy hand and fingers cold;
With whispered voice and silent tread
He summons us to join the dead.

With pallied brow and ghastly stare,
With dampened locks of whitened hair;
He calls to us though life we crave
To follow to the silent grave.

Of pity he but little knows,
And mercy scarcely ever shows;
Men cannot bribe him with their wealth
Nor yet escape him by their stealth.

Sometimes with hurried step and strong;
Sometimes he tarries late and long;
But soon or late he visits all
And shrouds in darkness great and small.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

EVIL VOICES.

Be still, O heart of mine!
These strange confusing voices seem
The counterpart of some wild dream,
Within a haunted shrine.

Yet all too real are they;
And loud, and ever louder still,
They call to rouse the conscious will
Their dictates to obey.

Now urging thee to do
Some deed, by evil passion stirred,
Foul, dark, like some uncleanly bird,
That hides its prey from view.

And now an act of shame;
The demons of a Hellish race
Join hands to bring to thee disgrace,
And smirch a virtuous name.

Be still, O heart of mine!
And when the evil voices stir,
Give thou no heed, lest thou should err,
And miss the mark divine.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A LOVE SONG.

There was a maiden fair to see;
I knew she loved and loved but me;
Yet she would always hide it.

To have her pledge her love to me,
I've failed, and failed most desperately,
Though I have often tried it.

For after all, my lad, the test
Of human love is love confessed,
In earth or heaven above you;

And so my heart doth ever yearn
To have her tell me in return,
"I love you, dear, I love you."

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE SHADOWY LAND OF DREAMS.

"Good night," we say, and then away
To the shadowy land of dreams;
A nod and a wink, and before you can think
You are there—at least so it seems.

Such very strange things the memory brings
Back from this mystical sphere,
That sometimes we wonder, as we sit and ponder,
Whether we've really been there.

In this mystical land bewildered we stand,
Enchanted by scenes of delight;
Its wonders excel all that tongue can tell,
Its glories burst forth on our sight.

'Tis not always so, for sometimes, you know,
'Tis a horrible place indeed;
Such awful fright! Such sorry plight!
With no one to help in our need.

But not very long do we tarry among
These changeable shadowy scenes;
For, with shudder and shake we're quickly awake,
And vanish the land of our dreams.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

MOLLY K—

Romping, teasing all the day,
Such a girl is Molly K——.
 Jolly face and full of fun,
 Wreathed in smiles from sun to sun.

Happy as the day is long,
Cheerful as a morning song;
 Even though the skies be gray
 Nothing bothers Molly K——.

Always getting into scrapes,
Scarcely anything escapes.
 If it's work instead of play
 You can count on Molly K——.

Carelessly she skips along,
Worries not if things go wrong;
 When there seems to be delay
 Every one blames Molly K——.

Kind, as everybody knows,
Malice, rarely ever shows;
 Anger does not with her stay,
 Even-tempered Molly K——.

Tender hearted, moved by love,
Gentle as a white winged dove;

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

Helping someone every day;
Blessings on our Molly K——.

Strangest mixture ever known!
Yet our Molly's not alone;
Everywhere your feet may stray
You can find a Molly K——.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WAITING FOR THE FISH TO BITE.

On the bank of some cool stream,
Where the rippling waters seem
To sparkle with a crystal sheen,
Where the shady nooks invite,
Here we sit from morn 'till night
Waiting for the fish to bite.

Even though the bait is fine,
Oftentimes the fish decline
To feed from off a hook and line;
So with patience we must wait,
'Till the nibbling at the bait
Indicates poor finny's fate.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

HELEN—

Ah! yes, it is a pleasant task,
Though difficult, this which you ask,
The real Helen to unmask.

Shall I say fair of feature, face?
Nay! nay! the rather let me trace
Diviner forms of love and grace.

Beneath the outward and the seen
A noble spirit, calm, serene,
That hates the cowardly and mean.

That loves the truth, and lives it, too,
Despising aught that has to do
With falsehood, or with things untrue.

A well developed mind and strong,
That stands like flint against the wrong,
All heedless of the evil throng.

Though she has suffered much, God knows,
Yet with a cheerful face she goes
To help to lighten others' woes.

Unselfish in her every deed,
With busy hands supplying need,
The ministry of help her creed.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WHEN LOVE RULES.

What though the wintry days be cold,
And winter's snow may fall?
There's summer gladness in the heart
When love rules over all.

The night may be as dark as death,
Its dreariness appall;
Hope for the morrow flames and burns
When love rules over all.

The world may be a silent place,
With no sweet voice to call,
But nature sings ten thousand tunes
When love rules over all.

And work is but a dreary drudge,
And tired hands may fall;
But theres' no mean or common toil
When love rules over all.

'Tis love that gives the soul a joy
Akin to that above;
For he's in tune with God and heaven
Whose life is ruled by love.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

INQUISITIVENESS.

TO W H. K.

She's just a little brown-eyed girl,
Who loves her dolls and books,
'Tis hard to paint her picture here
Or to describe her looks.
She's neither very fat nor thin,
Nor very short or tall;
Just like some other girls you know,
Whose names you may recall.

She's just like other girls because
She always wants to know
So much about the many things
That puzzle grown folks so.
She's asking questions all day long
From early morn 'till dark.
'Tis strange, indeed, she does not turn
Into a question mark.

And I'm afraid this little girl,
The fault will ne'er outgrow;
For (let me whisper it to you),
The grown-up girls are so;
And womankind wherever found
Is very much the same,
For they are born inquisitive,
And "Mother Eve's" to blame.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WHEN WE WERE BOYS TOGETHER.

TO MY BROTHERS.

When we were boys together,
In spite of wind and weather,
No matter whether rain or shine—
O! hadn't we a jolly time?

When we were boys together
Care weighed as light as feather;
There was no need to mope or whine
For we had such a jolly time.

When we were boys together
The good old horse we'd tether;
We'd milk the cows and feed the swine,
And then we'd have a jolly time.

When we were boys together
Our hearts were tough as leather;
For maiden fair we did not pine
Because he had a jolly time.

When we were boys together
We fought, as boys will ever;
Their fault was, and sometimes mine,
And yet we had a jolly time.

Once more we're boys together,
For time has failed to sever
The hearts that 'round each other twine
To give us still a jolly time.

PART V.

Religious.

Through the glass of earthly vision
Things are dark and dimly traced,
And the soul beholds its mission
Only in the light of grace.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE PURE GARMENT.

Over the earth is the winter's snow,
Covering all that lies below,
Covering many a foul, dark blot,
Many a scarred, unsightly spot,
Pure and white like a garment, spread
Under the living, over the dead.

Wouldst thou be pure as the whitened snow?
Over thy soul must a garment go;
Covering that dark and foulsome thing,
Covering thy guilt, covering thy sin;
Spread by the hand of the spotless One,
Garment of faith in God's dear Son.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

TWO MEN.

Up to the ancient shrine
There went two men to pray,
The one a boastful Pharisee,
Who chiefly went to say
How good he was, and pour
Into Jehovah's ear
A flood of empty words, and vain,
Thinking that God would hear.

The other trembling stood,
Uncertain of his quest,
His eyes toward heaven he dare not lift
But smote upon his breast;
No virtue does he claim
Nor deed of good recall,
Enough for him that Mercy's gate
May open at his call.

Still at the modern shrine
The two are found to-day!
The Pharisee and the Publican
Who enter there to pray.
The one is unforgiven,
The other justified;
For mercy's gate is closed to all
Who revel in their pride.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

Sunshine and shadow,
Day after day;
Daylight and darkness,
God's perfect way:
Not all of sunshine, nor all of night;
Each has its purpose; God's way is right.

Seasons of gladness
Come to us all;
Sometimes dark shadows
Around us fall:
Life is a mixture of good and ill,
And surely 'tis best, it is God's will.

Not ours the choosing
Of lot or place;
Ours the leaving of
All to His grace:
His perfect wisdom stands every test,
And knows no failure; God's plan is best.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WE THANK THEE.

For food and raiment, light and air,
For all of nature's gifts so fair,
For joy and gladness, everywhere,
 Father in Heaven, we thank Thee.

For peace and plenty through the land,
For homes unbroken by death's hand,
For strength to finish as we planned,
 Father in Heaven, we thank Thee.

For watchful care through the year,
For shelter when the storm was near,
For loving hearts and friendships dear,
 Father in Heaven, we thank Thee.

For Mary's high exalted Son,
For grace through Him the wrong to shun,
For rest and home when earth is done,
 Father in Heaven, we thank Thee.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE DARKENED GLASS.

Much of life in mist is shrouded
And we only know in part,
For with human reason clouded
How shall God to man impart
Truth eternal;
Truth to penetrate the heart.

Through the glass of earthly vision
Things are dark and dimly traced,
And the soul beholds its mission
Only in the light of grace:
Light eternal,
Streaming from the Father's face.

Problems of this life should therefore
Urge our souls on God to call,
As we ask the why and wherefore
Of His purpose in it all:
Wondrous purpose,
Souls from error to recall.

Come then, oh, thou great revealer,
Open up the book divine
And to every true believer
Speak in tones of truth sublime:
Speak to show us
That our lives are part of thine.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

PERFECT PEACE.

In perfect peace: Whose mind is staid
On Thee shall never be afraid;
Whose faith Jehovah's might doth prove
Cannot be harmed, cannot be moved.

In perfect peace: Amid the rush
Of life to feel the sacred hush;
The deep repose, the quiet rest,
Relief for all the care oppressed.

In perfect peace: Content to dwell
Within his love where all is well;
Content to place in His control
The varied interests of the soul.

In perfect peace—Nor chance nor change
Can alter with God doth arrange,
'Time's ruthless hand may work its will,
But God remains the sovereign still.

In perfect peace: The tumult o'er,
The haven reached, sin tossed no more.
A place of refuge from the storm,
Calm after strife, for darkness dawn.

In perfect peace: Beneath His care
It matters not if here or there;
E'en through this earthly life shall cease
Abideth still God's perfect peace.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

EMMANUEL.

Let earth rejoice: Let all be glad who mourn!
Emmanuel, the Prince of peace is born.

Wonder of wonders; God in flesh revealed!
Emmanuel the covenant hath sealed.

For ages past men sought for God in vain:
Emmanuel hath rent the vail in twain.

No more in sin, no more in darkness grope,
Emmanuel the gates of light doth ope.

Ye captives, bound in iron chains of vice,
Emmanuel redeems through sacrifice.

Weary of toil,—by countless duties pressed,
Emmanuel now waits to give you rest.

Heart-sick and sore, who find in earth no cure;
Emmanuel hath balm that's lasting, sure.

Exiles from God,—all who afar may roam,
Emmanuel has come to lead you home.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE WEB OF LIFE.

Into the web of life
Weave faith; and thou shalt know
The fabric fashioned by thy hands
To wondrous strength shall grow.

Weave in the threads of hope,
And weave them through thy deeds;
Their varying hues shall give to life
The color that it needs.

Into thy life weave love,
Whose golden skeins alone
Shall add a beauty and a charm,
A lustre of their own.

Weave faith and hope and love,
These three; and bye and bye,
A rich design thou shalt create
To please the Master's eye.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

PROCRASTINATION.

The path of Christ runs by your door,
Arouse, thee, then, and take it!
The road to evil seek no more,
Arouse, thee, and forsake it!

Plead not, like Felix, long ago,
A more convenient season;
But search within thy soul to know,
For this delay a reason.

Say! can it be that o'er thy life
Some fair Drusilla bendeth?
Fling from thee this unhallowed wife
E'er mercy thou offendeth.

For lo! the preacher speaketh still
Of judgment on the morrow:
Accept the Christ! delay not till
The day is dark with sorrow.

The path of Christ runs by your door,
Oh! hasten, brother, take it!
And leave the beaten way of sin,
Oh! hasten and forsake it.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE DIVINE HELPER.

When sin has plunged my soul in gloom,
When midnight comes instead of noon;
When on the verge of ruin vast,
My heart cries out to Thee at last;
Then, Jesus, speak my sins forgiven
And light for me the way to heaven.

When sorrow chafes my spirit sore,
And grief comes to me o'er and o'er,
When fear and doubt my heart oppress,
And fill my life with deep distress;
Then, Saviour, drive away my fear
And whisper to me words of cheer.

When life is hard, and harder still
The road that leads to Zion's hill;
When danger often near me lurks,
Disaster, too, its havoc works;
Oh! Lord of might, reach down Thine arm
And save Thy servant from all harm.

And when the messenger of death
Shall close my eyes, and steal my breath;
When I shall bid my friends adieu,
With earth receding from my view;
Then, Jesus, Saviour, Mighty Lord,
Thy promise and Thy power afford.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT.

Only a star in the eastern skies,
Shining with holy light;
Only a star that the wise men saw
As they gazed with eager sight.

Only a song by the heavenly choir
Chanted o'er Bethlehem's plain,
"Glory to God" and "Peace upon earth,"
Re-echoes the glad refrain.

Only a babe in a manger rude,
A child in the cattle's stall;
Only a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,
Yet the Saviour of us all.

Only the Christ of the long ago,
Coming to Bethlehem town;
Only the Christ of the prophet's dream,
The Messiah of great renown.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

A HUMAN CRY.

If I should happen to lose my way
In this world of sin and strife;
If, at the last, I shall fail to find
The way of eternal life,—
Then, pity me, God! Thou Master of men,
And grant me another chance again.

For there are so many songs that lure
My feet from the narrow way;
And the darkening shades of the night fall fast
After the close of the day.
O! can I be lost 'neath a starless sky
With no one to hear my despairing cry.

The years of my life on the dial of time
Go by like a swift-winged bird,
And I soon shall stand at the judgment bar,
I, who have so often erred;
Then, speak to me, God, O! speak to me then,
And grant me another chance again.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IN HOC SIGNO VINCES!

Not with the gleam of helmets
Nor flash of sword and shield,
The armies of Jehovah
Go forth to take the field.

No roar of mighty cannon,
No sound of clashing steel,
No trampling out the life blood
Beneath war's iron heel.
No trail of human sorrow
To mark the path of strife;
No death or desolation
To mar the peace of life.

But in the name of Mercy
His armies onward move,
To teach to warring nations
The brotherhood of Love.
The sacred cross of Jesus
On every banner fly,
And "In Hoc Signo Vinctus"
Forever is the cry.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE CHRIST.

He comes! The Christ expected long!
The silent night is stirred by song
Of "Peace on Earth, Good will to men,"
The lowly Christ of Bethlehem.

We see the childhood life unfold,
And soon we find in Temple old,
With knowledge of God's wondrous ways,
The faithful Christ of boyhood days.

He taught men freedom to secure;
He preached the Gospel to the poor,
Regardless of the Sceptic's frown—
The fearless Christ of Nazareth town.

His presence cheered the darkest night,
And chased away all gloom and fright:
His voice rebuked the angry sea—
The Saviour Christ of Galilee.

His days were spent in doing good;
He healed, as only Saviour could,
The sick and sore, the blind and lame—
The Christ of wonder-working fame.

He drank the cup of bitter woe
Alone: because He loved us so;

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

In garden still, what agony!
The lonely Christ of Gethsemane.
His life was full of righteousness;

And friend and foe as well confess
"I find in Him no fault at all,"
The spotless Christ of Pilate's Hall.

But hate and malice justice buy:
The Son of God goes forth to die:
He bears the cross through crowd and press,
The silent Christ with scarlet dress.

Come, now! And gaze upon the cross!
See how for you He suffered loss!
O! Hallowed cross! O! Sacred tree!
The suffering Christ of Calvary.

But death can never conquer life,
For life will win in every strife:
Death now from humankind is torn;
The risen Christ of Easter morn.

He leaves the world, yet never leaves;
His spirit still to mankind cleaves:
He bids us preach, lest men forget,
The ascended Christ of Olivet.

O! Blessed Christ! Whose presence means
The glory of our fondest dreams;
The Christ who comes to earth again;
The changeless Christ who dwells with men.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

LIFE.

Life is more than merely living
The allotted time of men;
More than simply passing over
A brief three-score years and ten.
Life is something higher, holier,
Than our low conceptions frame;
Something broader, something vaster,
Something worthier of our aim.

Life is something sweeter, nobler,
Than the poet's song can tell;
Something more sublime and glorious
Than the highest note can swell.
Life is living; life is loving;
Life is working hand and brain;
Life is learning, life is giving,
Life is serving God and man.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

CONTENTMENT.

Be thou content, within thy soul possessing
The calm and quiet of a life of trust;
Then art thou rich beyond the world's conception.

The sumptuous feast or solitary crust
Are both alike to thee, if in thy quest
Thou findest God, the highest and the best.

Content to know, that in His wise provision,
Nor great nor small escape His loving care;
The lowliest souls from Him all good deriving,
While kings and princes in His bounty share!
Who looks to Him need have of want no fear;
God's angel ministry is ever near.

Be thou content. Like waves around thee surging

The spirit of unrest pervades the air;
Shut fast the door that guards thy soul's seclusion,

And let no thought of worldliness be there:
Whate'er to thee in wisdom may be sent
Accept submissively, and be content.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

ALONE WITH GOD.

Alone with God, at Jesus' feet,
To learn His gracious will;
For in this safe and sure retreat
The soul at once grows still.

Alone with God; far from the noise,
The tumult and the strife;
'Tis here the soul must gain its poise,
Its furnishings for life.

Alone with God; in secret prayer,
With no disturbing voice;
The trusting heart finds refuge there
And weary ones rejoice.

Alone with God; and out of touch
With all the world holds dear;
For in His presence, O, how much
Of earth must disappear.

Alone with God, yet not alone,
For here all spirits meet;
And God, to all, himself makes known,
In blest communion sweet.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

CONFIDENCE.

When I know that God surrounds me,
That His arms are wrapt around me,
What have I to fear?

While the voice of one that loves me
Speaks from out the skies above me,
Whispering words of cheer.

Though the fiery furnace try me,
Come the storm and tempest nigh me,
These come but to test.

When the Saviour stands beside me
And beneath His wings I hide me,
I can safely rest.

When the way is all uncertain,
Dark and heavy hangs the curtain,
Veiling out the light;
Still the Father's loving kindness,
Illuminating human blindness,
Leadeth all aright.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE ONLY WAY.

No other name to men is given
Save this alone,
The name of Him who for our sin
Did once atone.

One hand alone can give the touch
Of saving power ;
Who feels the touch shall strength receive
For every hour.

One only path there is that leads
To refuge sweet ;
Who finds this way shall find at last
A safe retreat.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

IS IT NOTHING TO YOU?

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Is it nothing that He, your Saviour, should die?
Comes there never a feeling
Thy hearts' love revealing,
As you gaze on the cross uplifted on high?

Is it nothing to you, can redemption be bought
At such marvelous cost, and yet be unsought?
The Christ mutely pleading—
And still all unheeding,
Canst thou pass Him by without ever a thought?

Is it nothing to you though the heavens should
weep,
And the heart of the Father its vigilance keep
O'er a Son that is slain,
Amid anguish and pain,
Is it nothing to you? Does thy conscience still
sleep?

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Does this soul-stirring question bring forth no
reply?
Can you still pass along
With the unholy throng,
With never a care for the Christ who is nigh?

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

Is it nothing to you, oh, can it be true,
That the sufferings of Christ have no meaning for
you?

Though your Saviour hath died,
By your sins crucified,
Is it nothing to you? Is it nothing to you?

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE SOUL'S DESIRE.

In the glow of early morning,
At the waking of the day,
How my soul for God is yearning
With desires that come to stay.

When at noon the sun is beaming
With its rays of golden light,
For its strength my heart is leaning
On the bosom of His might.

In the crimson glow of evening,
When the world seems bathed in fire,
Still for God my spirit breathing
Finds in Him its great desire.

In the midnight with its stillness
When the hush is over all;
Rests my soul in God's great goodness,
Waiting for the morning's call.

All things else my soul now leaving,
Craves naught but His gracious power,
Whether morn, or noon, or evening,
Or at midnight's darkest hour.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE REALMS OF FAITH.

How little do we understand
Of God and His mysterious ways!
The doings of His unseen hand
Are shrouded in a misty maze.
His dealings with us are so strange
That sometimes in our doubts we ask—
Why He, who all things doth arrange,
Hath portioned us so hard a task?

For life is hard, and oftentimes,
When more than heavy seems the load,
Our weary, over-burdened minds
Are tortured as by sharpened goad;
Yes! tortured with the painful thought,
Thought of disordered brain begot,
That God, our maker, who hath brought
Us into being loves us not.

For if He loves us, why does He
Seem oft' to leave us all alone
To grapple with life's mystery,
Into such great proportions grown?
What purpose can He have in view
In veiling all His strange designs,

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

And shutting out from mortal view
All knowledge of the mystic lines?

O! blinded reason stay thy power,
Or thou wilt drive us to despair!
The realms of faith above thee tower,
Then haste, my soul, find shelter there!
'Tis there that thou shouldst ever turn,
Believing in the Crucified,
And soon shalt thou in fullness learn
To trust Him, who for thee hast died.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

SILENT PRAYER.

Hush every voice and every sound,
Let noise and clamor cease ;
Let silence dwell without, within,
To bring its sweet release.

Let not the faintest whispered breath
Disturb the quietude,
Nor even thought of worldliness
This sacredness intrude.

For while a soul communes with God,
Let nothing enter there
To bring confusion to the mind
That waits on God in prayer.

For what is prayer, but longing for
The things of heavenly worth ;
The spirit's flight, unseen, unheard,
Up through the mists of earth.

And what is prayer, but entrance way
Into the heart of God ;
The silent tread of burdened thought
O'er paths by angels trod.

The blending of divinity
With human heart and kind,

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

The lifting of the human up
Into the great Divine.

If prayer be such a sacred thing,
If God invites to prayer,
Let it be wafted silently
Like fragrance on the air.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

THE THOUGHT OF GOD.

Some call thee God, Creator, Lord,
And some the Great Unknown;
Jehovah, Mighty Spirit, Thou,
The King upon the throne;
But as for me I would the rather
Come to Thee and call Thee Father.

Some think of Thee as final Judge
With countenance severe,
Before whose awful majesty
The nations must appear;
But let me not like many another
Forget to think of Thee as Brother.

Some know Thee only as a God
With power to slay and kill;
A fierce, avenging Deity,
Who works destruction still;
But O! the great and wondrous favor
To learn to know Thee as a Saviour.

UNPRETENTIOUS VERSES

WATCHING OVER ALL.

In this busy world of action
God is watching over all;
Empires vast and nations ruleth,
Yet He notes the sparrow's fall.

He it is that guides the planets
As they roll through boundless space,
His the hand that paints the lily,
With its loveliness and grace.

Drives the foam across the ocean,
Gives the waves their mighty force,
And with equal care and patience
Marks the tiny streamlet's course.

Fans the tempest into fury,
Hurls the lightning from the sky,
Yet as gently as a mother
Stoops to hear an infant's cry.

Hangs the sun within the heavens,
That its light may blaze afar;
With the taper of His glory
Lighteth every twinkling star.

Lifts the lofty towering mountains,
Stretches out the restless sea;
Yet with tender love and mercy
Watcheth over you and me.

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